



STATE OF ALABAMA

**APPALACHIAN STRATEGY
STATEMENT**

FY-2005

**BOB RILEY
GOVERNOR**

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Introduction

Vision: Appalachia will achieve socio-economic parity with the nation.

Mission statement of ARC: ARC's mission is to be a strategic partner and an advocate for sustainable community and economic development in Appalachia.

Each year, the thirteen member-states of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) publish strategy statements outlining their plans for the use of ARC funds in the designated ARC service areas of their respective states. Programs and activities benefiting the residents of those areas are eligible to receive consideration for funding from the funds designated by Congress for that purpose. Thirty-seven counties in northern Alabama are included in the service area of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). These counties are listed on the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) web site: <http://adeca.state.al.us/> as well as the ARC web site at <http://www.arc.gov/counties>.

This strategy statement is submitted annually to the Commission and outlines the State's commitment for the use of ARC funds. It was written with the assistance of the eight Local Development Districts serving Appalachian Alabama: West Alabama Regional Commission, Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham, Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments, Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments, North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments, South Central Alabama Development Commission, Central Alabama Regional Planning Commission, and East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission and David Hughes of the Appalachian Regional Commission staff in Washington.

Overview of the ARC Alabama Program

Organization

The Appalachian Regional Commission is a regional economic development agency, representing a partnership of federal, state, and local governments, designed to address local needs. The Commission was established by Congress as part of the Appalachian Regional Development Act (ARDA) of 1965. In March of 2002, ARC was granted an historic five-year reauthorization by the 107th Congress, authorizing the agency's operation through fiscal year 2006.

ARC is comprised of the governors of 13 Appalachian states and a federal co-chair, who is appointed by the president. Grassroots participation is provided through state support and multi-county development organizations called local development districts (LDDs). Each year Congress appropriates funds, which ARC allocates among its member states. The Appalachian governors prepare annual Appalachian strategy statements (such as this one), solicit and receive proposals, and select projects for ARC approval.

The development organization for ARC Alabama functions within the Governor's Office. Administration responsibilities for the development programs of the ARC were assigned by the Governor to the Director of the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA). As such, the Director serves as an Alternate State Member of the Commission. Local support and technical assistance is provided by eight

LDDs which serve the entire Appalachian Alabama region. The LDDs are governed by boards composed of elected officials, business people, and other local leaders. (See Appendix 1 for a complete listing of LDDs).

Service Area

Thirty-seven of Alabama's sixty-seven counties are located within the Appalachian Region. These counties are: Bibb, Blount, Calhoun, Chambers, Cherokee, Chilton, Clay, Cleburne, Colbert, Coosa, Cullman, DeKalb, Elmore, Etowah, Fayette, Franklin, Hale, Jackson, Jefferson, Lamar, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone, Macon, Madison, Marion, Marshall, Morgan, Pickens, Randolph, St. Clair, Shelby, Talladega, Tallapoosa, Tuscaloosa, Walker, and Winston.

Appalachian Development Highway System

The completion of the Appalachian Development Highway System is a major component of economic growth in Appalachian Alabama. Corridors X, V, and U.S. Highway 78 will connect Memphis, Tennessee with Atlanta, Georgia. This corridor runs between Birmingham and Itawamba County, Mississippi, and will provide an alternative to U.S. 78, which is the only existing major east-west route in the area. U.S. 78 is presently a two-lane road that goes through many small towns and has heavy traffic, including heavy trucks. Corridor X is 95.3 miles long, and will have a minimum of four lanes and full access control.

Corridor V in Alabama will run 135.4 miles, from the Mississippi state line to the Tennessee state line, nearly all of which is open to traffic. Many sections were built in stages, however, and work continues on many of these portions of the corridor.

Several water and sewer facilities funded in recent years have been clustered near Corridor X in Walker County, in anticipation of the highway's completion. Though Corridors X and V remain important priorities, the State has determined that environmental infrastructure projects have a tremendous impact on the communities that will not benefit directly from the ARC highways. As the highway corridors near completion, in the future, we expect to concentrate more of our activities in areas directly served by the highways.

Economic and Social Status of ARC Alabama

Distressed Counties

ARC's primary objective is to help "distressed" counties generate sufficient economic development to stabilize the respective economy. ARC defines a "distressed" county as such:

1. a. per capita market income no greater than 67 percent of the U. S. average; and
- b. poverty rate at 150 percent of the U.S. average or greater; and
- c. three-year unemployment at 150 percent of the U.S. average or greater; or
2. Twice the U.S. poverty rate and either (a) or (c) above.

The following table denotes which Appalachian Alabama counties have received a *distressed* classification since FY2000:

FY2000	FY2001	FY2002	FY2003	FY2004¹	FY2005
Hale Macon Pickens	Franklin Hale Macon Pickens	Bibb Fayette Franklin Hale Macon Pickens	Bibb Fayette Franklin Hale Macon Pickens Winston	Bibb Franklin Hale Macon Pickens	Bibb Franklin Hale Macon Pickens

Economic Summary

Appalachian Alabama's population in 2000 was over 2,837,000 with nearly 1,565,000 employed in full or part-time work, or self-employed. These counties account for 64 percent of total employment in the state, which is slightly higher than the Appalachian portion's population share of 63 percent. Manufacturing sectors lost nearly 6 percent of their employment over the 1996-2000 period, although manufacturing still accounts for 20 percent of all private employment. Nonetheless, job losses have been pronounced in the furniture and fixtures industries, lumber and wood products industries, and apparel and textiles. Job growth in the finance, insurance, and real estate sectors increased by 22.4 percent over the 1996-2000 period--a slightly faster pace than the state as a whole. Overall, the service sector also posted a higher job growth than the statewide average. Farm and mining employment registered declines as these sectors continued to retrench. Meanwhile, Appalachian Alabama has borne a disproportionate share of reductions in civilian and military federal employment in the state over the last several years.

Program Initiatives Review

Project Spending History

Historically, ARC Alabama has allocated most of its funds to education/job training programs and infrastructure investment. For the fiscal years 1998 through the third quarter of 2004, the following summarizes Alabama's ARC spending:

Education/Job Training Programs (Goal One): 33%

Infrastructure or Water/Sewer Programs (Goal Two): 45%

Planning, Leadership and Civic Capacity Training (Goal Three): 7%

Business Development (Goal Four): 12%

Health (Goal Five): 3%

¹ Beginning with FY2004, ARC's system for classifying counties according to their economic status makes use of household poverty data gleaned from the 2000 Census of Population, United States Bureau of Census. County classifications from FY1994-FY2003 made use of household poverty data from the 1990 Census of Population.

The above is a historical perspective and not a representation of future policy orientation. Use of ARC funds is based on community needs and arising issues within Appalachian Alabama.

Summary of LDD Activities

Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments: (Colbert, Franklin, Lauderdale, Marion and Winston Counties) The Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments serves District 1, which includes Colbert, Franklin, Lauderdale, Marion and Winston counties. Of these five counties, only Franklin County was designated an ARC “distressed” county in FY2004. NACOLG served District 1 during FY2004 by working to improve the economic quality of life in the region. As a part of this continuing effort, NACOLG, in conjunction with the Small Business Development Center at the University of North Alabama, annually sponsors a Minority and Woman-Owned Business Conference. The 2003 conference was conducted on July 17, 2003, at the Florence Conference Center in Lauderdale County and the 2004 conference is scheduled for late August or early September, 2004. The conference will inform the participants of opportunities available in the areas of finance, marketing, and special programs. Additionally, NACOLG continues to work with the Small Business Development Center in promoting NACOLG’s Revolving Loan Fund Program. NACOLG also continues to contact area banks and other organizations with information about the RLF Program in an effort to create jobs and reduce unemployment in the region.

In FY2004, NACOLG assisted its member governments and other organizations within its five-county region, in the planning and preparation of applications for ARC assistance. These included the following: 1) Florence Children’s Museum – Classroom to be used for Environmental Education; 2) Franklin County Family Services Center – Computer Laboratory; 3) Haleyville Chamber of Commerce – Leadership Program; 4) Town of Phil Campbell – Water Improvements and Extensions; 5) Shoals Entrepreneurial Center – Continued operation of Shoals Commercial Culinary Center; 6) City of Winfield – Sewer Improvements and Extensions; 7) Town of Hodges – Water Improvements.

Also in FY2004, NACOLG assisted the Shoals Entrepreneurial Center of Florence in the development of a satellite incubator facility. NACOLG is administering the Center’s EDA project which consists of the renovation of an industrial building to be used for an industrial pod expansion. NACOLG assisted their member governments in applying for grants to provide physical infrastructure such as water, sewer and road improvements. NACOLG also assisted local governmental entities in procuring grants which enabled them to assist local firms in the creation and retention of jobs. NACOLG provided Grant and Technical Assistance to twenty-three (23) fire departments in the region who received grants through the FEMA Fire Grant program.

As part of its planning process, NACOLG assisted its local governmental entities in completing master plans, comprehensive plans, tourism development plans, downtown revitalization plans, redistricting plans, hazard mitigation plans and homeland security plans. Specific projects included the following: 1) Assisted in the preparation of a master plan for the Port of Florence; 2) Assisted in the preparation of a master plan for

the Wilson Dam Corridor; 3) Began work on an EDA-funded Heritage Tourism Development Plan and Strategy; 4) Completed a waste water facilities plan for the unincorporated Ford City area in Colbert County; 5) Completed a downtown redevelopment plan for the City of Haleyville; and 6) Participated in the Alabama Communities of Excellence program in the cities of Haleyville and Guin. NACOLG also completed Phase II of the Statewide Strategic Plan and incorporated this information into its Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

West Alabama Regional Commission: (Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, Tuscaloosa Counties) Greene County is the only non-ARC county served by the West Alabama Regional Commission.

West Alabama's ARC activities are diverse with emphasis on each of ARC's goal areas. The LDD is participating in a number of tourism-related programs that support business development as well as sustained communities. We nominated 14 tourism attractions throughout the six Appalachian counties in West Alabama for the ARC-National Geographic Society project to promote tourism in Appalachia. The LDD is again participating in the planning of the unique Alabama-Mississippi rural tourism conference which targets small, rural communities by providing education about the tourism industry and the potential for tourism in rural areas. It also provides a network of people, organizations and agencies with common interests and goals whom conference attendees may contact for further assistance.

The LDD is working closely this fiscal year with a civil rights museum in Greensboro to develop its economic benefits for the community and is preparing a project proposal for funding from Alabama Power Foundation. Additionally, LDD staff membership on the Cahaba Trace Commission provides opportunities to be involved in ARC's goal for self-sustaining communities through historic and environmental preservation projects.

The LDD is assisting the Hale Empowerment and Revitalization Organization in Hale County with meeting some of their community needs through technical assistance, information and referral to other agencies. The LDD is providing technical assistance in support of the ARC flexi-grant project for downtown revitalization in selected West Alabama distressed communities.

The LDD is supporting ARC's goal for accessible, affordable health care with a project to renovate part of an existing building to be used as a dental clinic in Gordo. The LDD also supports ARC's health goal by providing information on funding, programs, and projects to teen pregnancy prevention organizations, abused children programs, and telemedicine program personnel.

Telecommunications remains a priority in West Alabama via an expansion of the Pickens County Board of Education distance learning network in the county and a similar project through the Hale County Board of Education. The Bibb County Board of Education is also developing a proposal for distance learning throughout the school system.

The LDD continues to assist and promote public awareness of the Bethel Community Outreach, Inc. in west Tuscaloosa following an ARC grant that provided classroom computers and office equipment to the dropout prevention program. The LDD nominated the project for a community award, which was presented in May 2004. Plans are underway for an LDD staff member to become an authorized ESRI instructor for GIS training at Shelton State Community College, making Shelton State the first school in the State to offer these courses.

The LDD is supporting ARC's goal for infrastructure with a water treatment plant replacement project in Gordo. Two LDD staffers will develop sewer infrastructure applications for EPA funding for Special Appropriations Projects in Gordo and Centreville-Brent.

Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham: (Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, St. Clair, Shelby and Walker Counties) are served by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham. The LDD continues to assist local boards of education, municipalities and county commissions in the development of distance learning, video arraignment, telemedicine and teleconferencing capabilities. The St. Clair County Commission is presently installing a video arraignment and tele-conferencing system that was funded by ARC in FY-2003.

In the coming fiscal year, the LDD will help the Jefferson and St. Clair County Commissions extend their ARC-funded video arraignment systems to include connections at the two state prisons located in these two counties. After utilizing these new video arraignment systems, public officials in Jefferson and St. Clair Counties realize that significant savings could be achieved if all state prisons had video arraignment capabilities.

LDD staff is also assisting the Northwest Alabama Mental Health Authority in its efforts to install a telecommunications system for its mental health clinics that are located in five west Alabama counties with telemedicine, data and VOIP telephone service. In addition, the agency is also working with Tech Birmingham and the Jefferson County Commission in an effort to install a telecommunications network that will serve the businesses located in downtown Birmingham that can eventually be expanded to serve telecommunications users located in adjacent counties.

The LDD is working with member governments on the expansion of existing industrial parks located in Blount and Jefferson Counties and with the city of Clanton and Chilton County for the development of a new industrial park. The LDD continues to assist area businesses with their gap financing needs. Area municipalities continue to participate in the Regional Planning Commission's new Main Street Program that is focused on the rehabilitation of downtown business districts.

East Alabama Regional Planning & Development Commission: (Calhoun, Chambers, Cherokee, Clay, Cleburne, Coosa, Etowah, Randolph, Talladega, and Tallapoosa Counties) are served by the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (EARPDC). Two military installations have been turned over to their respective local communities within the last few years, and intensive efforts are underway to create as many jobs as possible through the redevelopment of these properties. Both installations will be redeveloped using mixed land uses including industrial, a wildlife preservation, recreational, residential, and commercial uses. At the installation in Calhoun County, McClellan Properties, grants were acquired to improve the wastewater treatment plant to support future development on the Properties.

In preparation for the closing of Fort McClellan, grants were obtained to aid in the establishment of a small business incubator, which opened in 1998. The 5-year anniversary of the incubator was celebrated in May 2003. Nine companies have successfully graduated from the facility and over 200 jobs have been created by the incubator businesses. Annual wages amounted to \$3.5 million in 2002; annual revenues were over \$15 million. Currently, 14 young businesses reside at the incubator.

EARPDC continues to increase leadership and administrative capabilities of local government officials through training seminars held periodically in association with the monthly meetings of the EAC Board of Directors. EARPDC also encourages local officials, staff, and boards to participate in statewide conferences and training sessions by running articles about upcoming events in its monthly newsletter, which is distributed extensively throughout the region and the state, and by sending brochures to its mailing list.

EARPDC has pursued every opportunity to offset the cost of improving the water, sewer and road systems in the region. Both CDBG and EDA grants have been awarded to provide infrastructure improvements; EARPDC will continue to pursue grant opportunities in the future. The LDD maintains a water and sewer inventory by county that includes a report outlining the service and capability of each system and a map showing each system's lines for each county. The report portion will be updated in 2004. The maps were updated in 2003. The LDD continues to pursue grant opportunities to improve infrastructure to brownfield areas as well as greenfield areas. Development efforts continue at McClellan Properties (the now-closed Fort McClellan), with plans underway to build an industrial access road to 900 acres of greenfield and developed areas.

The Lake Martin Area Industrial; Development Authority (LMAIDA) is in the process of developing the infrastructure for the Lake Martin Regional Industrial Park in Coosa County. LMAIDA has obtained both state and federal grants for access, water, and wastewater treatment for this 85-acre park.

The largest and most far-reaching activity within the East Alabama region is the infrastructure expansion in the City of Lincoln in response to Honda's decision to locate its new plant nearby. A package of federal and state grants was assembled to upgrade the roads, water, and wastewater treatment facilities. These facilities will not only benefit the Honda plant, but will also accommodate the expected growth within Lincoln itself. By

the completion of Honda's initial project plus its expansion, 4,300 jobs will have been created.

In response to the location of a new Honda plant in Alabama, many Honda suppliers have also elected to locate here. Bridgewater Interiors, LLC, a manufacturer of car seats, has located in Oxford. State funds were used to install water and sewer to the Bridgewater site.

Although the Honda project is having a strong and positive economic impact on the region, studies has shown that most of the jobs in the United States are generated by existing industries. In acknowledgement of this fact, the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama has purchased the state license for an existing industry program and database. The Partnership has offered sublicenses to all counties and regions in the state. EARPDC purchased a sublicense in early 2004 and offered its use to the LDD counties. Six chambers of commerce in the ten county region have signed on to the program and will be interviewing their existing industries over the next six months. The database compiled from the interview information will allow the LDD to generate reports on the general health and trends of existing business in the region.

The small town of Cedar Bluff in Cherokee County has completed the Small Town Design Initiative with the help of an ARC grant. The output of the initiative is a 20-50 year plan for the town's future development.. The town is now in the process of developing an independent organization to carry out the plan over the long term.

Over the past 3 years, the EARPDC has worked on an ARC-funded, cooperative highway corridor planning project with the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham. This project, the I-20 Corridor Study, is a detailed evaluation of future development potential in a five-mile wide corridor along I-20 between downtown Birmingham and Heflin, AL. Extensive computer mapping of the corridor was completed during Phase I of the project. The two regions are currently working on Phase II of the project, which includes an evaluation of the "development readiness" of potential future industrial development sites in the corridor and the development of a computer model to calculate the financial return to local governments in the corridor that can be generated from targeted infrastructure investments to these potential future development sites. The EARPDC is also working with local governments along Highway 280 to develop a strategic planning program for that corridor that would focus on highway access management strategies. This project will also involve the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham and the Lee Russell Council of Governments to coordinate planning efforts along the entire Highway 280 corridor from Birmingham to the Georgia State Line.

The Commission has created the staff capacity to assist in Contingency Planning for hazard mitigation and disaster response for counties and municipalities. Initial investigation indicated that few counties and municipalities have maintained contingency plans. The LDD is also working with the Emergency Management Agencies (EMAs) of the 10 counties to update their County Emergency Operations Plans to include technical hazards in addition to natural hazards.

The LDD is also working with eight of the ten county EMAs in the preparation of hazard mitigation plans, incorporating contingency plans for both counties and municipalities. These plans will meet the deadline of November 1, 2004 for approval by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

South Central Alabama Development Commission: (Bullock, Butler, Crenshaw, Lowndes, Macon, and Pike Counties). Served by the South Central Alabama Development Commission, Macon County is the only Appalachian county in Local Development District 5. This county of 23,788 (2002 est.) persons is also an ARC designated “distressed” county. Plagued by higher than average unemployment, high family poverty, and low per capita income rates, Macon County has undergone and is experiencing efforts to remedy these troubling figures. During FY 2003 and 2004, several projects received ARC support and funding. Each of these projects came about as a result of implementing the goals and objectives identified in the State’s *Annual Strategy Statement* as well as other local plans and strategies.

Central Alabama Regional Planning & Development Commission: (Autauga, Elmore and Montgomery Counties). Of the three counties served by CARPDC, Elmore is the only Appalachian County and has been designated by ARC as a “transitional” county. CARPDC is currently working with the communities in Elmore County on a number of projects including the following:

- ◆ Tallassee - recreational and senior center improvements, beautification through a tree planting project
- ◆ Eclectic - land use, zoning and subdivision regulations; a senior center/library facility
- ◆ Coosada- land use, zoning, and subdivision regulations; bike lanes connecting government services and recreational facilities.
- ◆ Deatsville – improvements to aging water service, creation of the town’s first community park, bike lanes and sidewalks along major thoroughfares, beautification through a tree planting project
- ◆ Millbrook – housing rehabilitation, sidewalks connecting residential areas to schools
- ◆ Elmore – coordination with Alabama Planning Institute for training of elected and appointed municipal officials, community beautification/green space project.
- ◆ Wetumpka – pedestrian transportation and economic development stimulus through development of a riverwalk, housing and community development in low/mod income communities, park and recreational improvement projects, participation in the Alabama Communities of Excellence Program
- ◆ Downtown/central business district evaluations and recommendations for each municipality in Elmore County

- ◆ Redistricting Services were provided for Coosada, Tallassee, Millbrook and Wetumpka as well as for Elmore County.

Evaluation and recommendations regarding community facilities and transportation access in Elmore County has and will be an on-going activity for the LDD. Residential growth pressures continue to be an area of concern and planning activities in Elmore County, particularly in the areas of Millbrook and Deatsville. This growth will create the need and desire for additional commercial and industrial growth already evident in the development of motels and retail uses in Millbrook and Prattville, and the increased activity in industrial development in Tallassee's industrial park. CARPDC has worked during the past year with the Elmore County Economic Development Authority on gathering data and pursuing funding for economic development activities within the LDD. Additionally, CARPDC is sponsoring the implementation of a Synchronist Business Information System for compiling information on companies and their key players along with employment history, product lines, production levels, expansion issues and governmental issues affecting business growth and development in Elmore and the other counties in Region 9.

CARPDC plans to assist the LDD in planning and preparing for the increasing growth pressures of new business, industry and residential development as well as in stabilizing and revitalizing existing businesses and residential areas.

North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments: (Cullman, Lawrence, and Morgan Counties) is served by the North-Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments. NARCOG is supporting ARC's goal for infrastructure with a sewage system in the Town of Eva and in the Town of Dodge City. Construction is scheduled for fall of 2004 or early spring 2005 in Eva and is underway in Dodge city. Additionally, NARCOG has been very successful in the creation of new jobs through its Revolving Loan Fund Program, thus reducing the unemployment in the NARCOG Region. A total of 30 loans have been made with \$2.6 Million Revolving Loan Funds, leveraging \$22 Million in private dollars and creating 483 jobs averaging \$5,695 per job. NARCOG submitted an application to USDA in February 2004 requesting \$200,000 from the Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program to re-capitalize the Revolving Loan Fund. The grant was approved April 1, 2004.

Education is a priority in the NARCOG Region. The LDD is assisting Morgan County with an ARC grant application, which will enhance the quality of the local workforce through partnerships involving business, education and community organizations.

During 2004, the LDD staff attended various seminars and meetings in an effort to obtain information and serve as a liaison with local governments. NARCOG continues to promote the LDD through the use of a visual display, which is set up at major conferences, local events and local governments, in addition to the mail out of a quarterly newsletter to approximately 1,200 persons in the NARCOG Region.

Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments: (DeKalb, Jackson, Limestone, Madison, and Marshall Counties) are served by the Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments. During the 2003 program year, the LDD expects to continue with the following efforts to increase the quality of life for the District's citizens.

- Ongoing technical assistance and grant support to regular grant programs & "targets of opportunity"
- Local "crisis response" actions (i.e. Tornado's/flooding activities)
- Supported Economic Development infrastructure projects – i.e. City of Fort Payne wastewater upgrade project (expected to generate at least 250 permanent jobs.)
- Continue RLF efforts (projected to loan over \$200K & generate over \$500K in private investment and create 40-50 new jobs.
- Continued support of area USDA Community Facilities Loan Program applications (an estimated 3-5 communities will be assisted in FY '03).
- Grant application preparation support will be provided again for the vital T-21/SAFTEA, LWCF, RTP, CDBG and FEMA/FIRE Grant Programs.
- District staff support and facilitation of the region's element of Phase II of the State Strategic Plan will continue. (Upon the completion of the Plan, the LDD will serve as a major interactive catalyst to facilitate action for the implementation of the prioritized projects and goals.
- The ARC funded Scottsboro Strategic Plan will be followed up with a program of support efforts for implementing major objectives in workforce development, downtown revitalization and tourism attraction/enhancement based upon the City's recent acquisition of Goosepond.
- Continue ongoing efforts to obtain a business incubator for Arab/Marshall County

Ongoing staff participation in vital information streaming on business incubators, job retention training, workforce development coordination and advocacy, and critical environmental issues will continue. In addition, the District's LDD staff will monitor vital unfolding Homeland Security issues and keep the counties advised on potential impacts at the local level.

Strategies for Appalachian Alabama

Strategic Goals

One of the key differences between ARC and other federal institutions is in the discretion given to the 13 states in determining how their allocated funds will be spent. Funds must be spent in accordance with ARC guidelines, on projects benefiting those counties designated as a part of the Appalachian Regional Commission's service area, and must meet at least one of ARC's four strategic goals and Alabama's state objectives. Specific strategies the State of Alabama may pursue to achieve our development goals are set forth below:

ARC Goal One: Increase job opportunities and per capita income in Appalachia to reach parity with the nation.

Strategic Objective 1.1: Foster Civic Entrepreneurship

State Strategy 1.1.1: Support training programs to increase the proficiency of business development practitioners, economic development officials, and international trade professionals.

State Strategy 1.1.2: Assist local communities to institute strategic planning and direction for future progress and improvement of their local economy.

State Strategy 1.1.3: Support local efforts to form partnerships, both short-term and long-term, between local governments, nonprofit community-based groups, and private businesses for economic and community improvement.

Strategic Objective 1.2: Diversify the Economic Base

State Strategy 1.2.1: Provide capital funding for the development and expansion of small business incubators.

State Strategy 1.2.2: Encourage and support revolving loan fund capitalization efforts for Local Development Districts.

State Strategy 1.2.3: Support efforts to improve access to capital for small and medium-sized businesses.

Strategic Objective 1.3: Enhance Entrepreneurial Activity in the Region

State Strategy 1.3.1: Provide support from programs that seek to establish an entrepreneurial climate throughout Appalachian Alabama.

State Strategy 1.3.2: Support programs and initiatives that provide training, assistance, and other resources to entrepreneurs for the creation and expansion of local businesses.

State Strategy 1.3.3: Support programs that encourage and teach youth entrepreneurship.

Strategic Objective 1.4: Develop and Market Strategic Assets for Local Economies

State Strategy 1.4.1: Support local efforts to market Appalachian Alabama to domestic and international visitors.

State Strategy 1.4.2: Support infrastructure development to increase tourism, based on the economic impact of the development.

State Strategy 1.4.3: Support training programs and workshops on tourism development for local areas.

Strategic Objective 1.5: Increase the Domestic and Global Competitiveness of the Existing Economic Base

State Strategy 1.5.1: Support programs that will increase goods and services exported from Appalachian Alabama.

State Strategy 1.5.2: Encourage the use of e-commerce applications by small and medium-sized enterprises to improve their supply, manufacturing, and distribution chains

State Strategy 1.5.3: Support initiatives that promote increased foreign direct investment in Appalachian Alabama.

ARC Goal Two: Strengthen the capacity of the people of Appalachia to compete in the global economy.

Strategic Objective 2.1: Foster Civic Entrepreneurship

State Strategy 2.1.1: Support youth leadership development efforts through leadership training, experience-based education programs, apprenticeships, youth-operated enterprises, and cooperative education activities.

State Strategy 2.1.2: Support efforts to establish ongoing local leadership training programs.

Strategic Objective 2.2: Enhance Workforce Skills through Training

State Strategy 2.2.1: Strengthen programs that provide basic skills and workforce training to increase employee capabilities, improve job skills, and upgrade marketable skills.

State Strategy 2.2.2: Support workforce readiness programs that provide skills necessary to acquire jobs.

State Strategy 2.2.3: Strengthen basic skills programs in the public school system and establish specific competency requirements.

State Strategy 2.2.4: Continue to improve public education through the implementation of statewide reforms.

State Strategy 2.2.5: Support programs and mobilize resources to increase adult literacy.

State Strategy 2.2.6: Support programs and initiatives that provide for career planning and placement.

Strategic Objective 2.3: Increase Access to Quality Child Care and Early Childhood Education

State Strategy 2.3.1: Support initiatives that provide opportunities for a quality preschool experience through parent support programs, quality childcare and preschool programs.

State Strategy 2.3.2: Assist communities in developing programs and services for families and caregivers of young children that will ensure that all children are healthy and prepared to succeed in school.

State Strategy 2.3.3: Support educational programs in K-12 that will expand and improve current programs.

State Strategy 2.3.4: Support programs that improve teacher quality by increasing professional development programs.

State Strategy 2.3.5: Support programs that will expand the use of telecommunications in education, especially K-12.

State Strategy 2.3.6: Support initiatives that will provide technical assistance to communities on marketing, long-term financing, and resource identification for the continuation of exceptional programs.

State Strategy 2.3.7: Support initiatives that will help parents and caregivers learn positive skills to help them meet the physical, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of all children.

Strategic Objective 2.4: Increase Educational Attainment and Achievement

State Strategy 2.4.1: Support initiatives that promote lifelong learning.

State Strategy 2.4.2: Support programs that reduce the school dropout rate in our Appalachian counties to equal or better than the national average.

State Strategy 2.4.3: Utilize telecommunications, computers, and other technological capabilities to deliver education and training programs.

Strategic Objective 2.5: Provide Access to Health-Care Professionals

State Strategy 2.5.1: Support educational programs that train health-care professionals who will locate in Appalachian Alabama.

State Strategy 2.5.2: Support programs to provide primary health care to Appalachian citizens.

Strategic Objective 2.6: Promote Health through Wellness and Prevention

State Strategy 2.6.1: Reduce the infant mortality rate in Appalachian counties that have rates 1.5 times greater than the national average.

State Strategy 2.6.2: Support programs to strengthen prenatal and neonatal health care and to provide education programs to reduce the infant mortality rates.

State Strategy 2.6.3: Support programs to prevent teen pregnancy.

ARC Goal Three: Develop and improve Appalachia's infrastructure to make the Region economically competitive.

Strategic Objective 3.1: Foster Civic Entrepreneurship

State Strategy 3.1.1: Encourage local leaders to explore innovative, cost-effective arrangements for delivery of services, including service consolidations.

State Strategy 3.1.2: Provide training, consultation, and financial support for local leaders and organizations to build capacity to address infrastructure challenges.

State Strategy 3.1.3: Support partnerships and regional efforts in infrastructure development.

State Strategy 3.1.4: Encourage water and wastewater infrastructure development through "self-help" projects that use the skills and commitment of local communities.

State Strategy 3.1.5: Support strategic planning initiatives for local organizations and agencies to capitalize on economic development opportunities created by the Appalachian Development Highway System.

Strategic Objective 3.2: Build and Enhance Basic Infrastructure

State Strategy 3.2.1: Make safe drinking water available by improving water treatment plants so they meet Safe Drinking Water Act standards.

State Strategy 3.2.2: The State will give priority to projects that extend water lines to communities where there is no service, or where there is an existing health hazard.

State Strategy 3.2.3: The State will give priority to projects that provide access to water and wastewater services in areas of highest need, areas that are economically depressed, areas that suffer high unemployment, and areas that have health hazards.

State Strategy 3.2.4: Encourage regional solutions to solid waste problems.

State Strategy 3.2.5: Provide water, sewer, and physical infrastructure needed to serve new and expanding industries and commercial development.

State Strategy 3.2.6: Support development of new industrial sites.

State Strategy 3.2.7: Construct industrial access roads to new or expanding industrial sites.

Strategic Objective 3.3: Increase the Accessibility and Use of Telecommunications Technology

State Strategy 3.3.1: Support initiatives that implement Alabama's Strategic Plan for Telecommunications in Appalachia.

State Strategy 3.3.2: Support efforts to link new and existing telecommunication networks.

State Strategy 3.3.3: Support training in the public, private, and non-profit sectors in Appalachian Alabama in the use of new technologies and applications.

State Strategy 3.3.4: Support projects that will evaluate existing architecture, infrastructure and equipment or facilitate the development of new applications and networks.

State Strategy 3.3.5: Support projects that will assist in the development of architecture infrastructure and equipment for new networks.

State Strategy 3.3.6: Support promising and innovative telecommunications applications and programs.

State Strategy 3.3.7: Encourage strategic investment in telecommunications infrastructure, including the use of conduit for fiber optic cable in basic infrastructure projects, that increases local, regional, and global connectivity.

State Strategy 3.3.8: Develop “smart parks” with telecommunications infrastructure, which will meet the needs of information industries.

Strategic Objective 3.4: Build and Enhance Environmental Assets

State Strategy 3.4.1: Support programs to raise awareness and leverage support for the reclamation and reuse of brownfields properties in industrial areas and mine-impacted communities.

State Strategy 3.4.2: Encourage eco-industrial development that can responsibly take advantage of the Region’s natural-resource assets.

State Strategy 3.4.3: Support regional planning and economic development policies and programs that promote good stewardship of the Region’s natural resources.

State Strategy 3.4.4: Support programs that encourage planning for, and development of, healthy and livable communities.

Strategic Objective 3.5: Promote the Development of an Intermodal Transportation Network

State Strategy 3.5.1: Work with state and local partners to identify and develop intermodal transportation facilities.

State Strategy 3.5.2: Support programs to encourage the expanded use of existing intermodal facilities.

State Strategy 3.5.3: Extend rail spurs into industrial areas, with a priority on those that serve multiple sites.

ARC Goal Four: Build the Appalachian Development Highway System to reduce Appalachia’s isolation.

Strategic Objective 4.1: Foster Civic Entrepreneurship

State Strategy 4.1.1: Encourage long-term strategic planning by local and regional leadership to take full advantage of the economic and community-building opportunities of the Appalachian Corridor Development.

State Strategy 4.1.2: Support local and multi-jurisdictional forums to promote communication and mutual understanding, and resolution of barriers to completion of the remaining ADHS miles.

Strategic Objective 4.2: Promote On-Schedule Completion of ADHS Corridors X and V

State Strategy 4.2.1: Support efforts to complete Corridor X.

State Strategy 4.2.2: Support efforts to complete Corridor V

State Strategy 4.2.3: Encourage the use of conduit for deployment of telecommunications technology.

Strategic Objective 4.3: Coordinate Work on ADHS State-Line Crossings

State Strategy 4.3.1: Encourage the coordination of technical information, funding disbursements, and construction scheduling between adjoining states to facilitate completion of state-line crossings of ADHS corridors.

Future Program Initiatives for FY05

Available Funds

It is anticipated that ARC Alabama in FY05 will receive an amount similar to that of FY04. Spending will likely follow regular patterns comparable to prior years; however, particular emphasis will be placed on physical infrastructure and telecommunications projects.

Special Initiatives

Proposals for funding for entrepreneurship must be supported by a demonstration that they will contribute to the achievement of the initiative goal. Business establishments that are not locally owned and are part of a larger non-locally based organization, i.e. branch plants, are ineligible for assistance under this entrepreneurship initiative.

The State's strategy for building entrepreneurial economies will include, but not be limited, to projects that:

- Build awareness and advocate creating entrepreneurial economies with communities and policy makers at the state and/or local level.
- Promote the integration of elements that help to form an entrepreneurial system at the state or regional level.
- Address identified gaps in and build the institutional capacity of any or all of five key elements of an entrepreneurial economy: access to capital and financial assistance; technical and managerial assistance; technology transfer; entrepreneurial education and training; and entrepreneurial networks.

In order to ensure that the people and businesses of the Appalachian region have the knowledge, skills, and access to telecommunications services to compete in the technology-based economy, the Alabama Appalachian program may provide technical assistance and fund projects for the following purposes:

- Increase affordable access to advanced telecommunications in the Region.
- Provide education and training for people, businesses, and governments in the Region in the use of telecommunications technology.
- Develop relevant technology readiness programs for industry groups and businesses in the region.
- Support entrepreneurial opportunities in information technology in the Region.

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) will seek to increase the use of technology, distance learning, telemedicine, video arraignment, economic development, and other telecommunications within Appalachian Alabama.

ARC funds will be used to develop a fiber optic backbone, where fiber is available at a reasonable cost, and will use other systems that are reasonable and available when fiber is not obtainable. Each system or network funded will include the necessary equipment to connect with other networks or systems.

ADECA will provide assistance in the design of the system and assist in writing open specifications, so that applicants will not have to rely on a particular vendor to both design and bid on a system. Technology training will be provided to teachers and technology coordinators whenever a system is installed. A list of vendors will be maintained in the Science, Technology and Energy Division of ADECA and will be provided to each applicant, with a disclaimer that no particular vendor is recommended and that all projects must be bid.

The State of Alabama will continue to participate in the ARC Export Trade Advisory Council (ETAC) and will support efforts to increase international trade and export development in Appalachian Alabama. The State will also assist in recruiting industries for trade expeditions and trade shows related to ETAC.

ARC Alabama will participate in the Flex-E-Grant Program for FY-2005 and through this program will continue to address technical assistance, leadership and civic capacity needs in Alabama's distressed counties.

The ARC Program Manager conducts an annual ARC Applications Workshop in July or August of each year, and speaks about the ARC program annually at the CDBG Applications Workshop. These workshops are opportunities to distribute information about the Appalachian Regional Commission program, and to provide technical assistance in the submission of pre-applications and full applications. Pre-applications for ARC funding are taken the entire month of August.

Key LDD Initiatives

Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments: (Colbert, Franklin, Lauderdale, Marion and Winston Counties) is served by the Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments (NACOLG). In FY2005, NACOLG will again sponsor activities that assist underserved, unemployed groups within the region with information to improve their economic quality of life. NACOLG will continue to publicize its RLF program in an effort to create jobs and reduce unemployment in the region. Adult education and family literacy will continue to be a major priority in District 1. Telecommunication projects will be explored and promoted as opportunities for such projects are developed. NACOLG will assist its member governments in promoting the tourism industry as a forceful and effective economic development tool.

Specific projects planned for 2005 include: 1) Continue to provide technical assistance to the City of Muscle Shoals in the development of an Airport Industrial Park at the Northwest Alabama Regional Airport; 2) Assist Marion County in the development of a Marion County, AL/State of Mississippi Industrial Park on Corridor X; and 3) Assist Winston County in developing an industrial park on the Winston County/Cullman County Line. As evidenced by these proposed projects, a regional concept is being

promoted. More area specific projects include: 4) Development of a county-wide industrial park in Marion County; 5) Continued development of the Vina Industrial Park; 6) Continue to provide technical assistance to the City of Tuscumbia regarding their Heritage Tourism Plan; and 7) Continue to assist the Shoals Entrepreneurial Center with their industrial pod expansion into the old Reltoe facility.

NACOLG will assist Beville State Community College in Marion County in submitting applications to the Economic Development Administration and to the Appalachian Regional Commission requesting funding assistance to be used for the expansion of their Health Science Program. Assistance will also be provided to Franklin County in their pursuit of ARC funding to be used for a telecommunication/telemedicine system within their new Franklin County Jail. NACOLG will also assist Helen Keller Hospital in Colbert County and Red Bay Hospital in Franklin County in soliciting ARC funding for their proposed telecommunication/telemedicine facilities.

NACOLG will also promote the completion of Corridor X and Corridor V as a part of the Appalachian Development Highway System which is a major component of economic growth in Appalachian Alabama.

West Alabama Regional Commission: (Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, Tuscaloosa Counties) are served by the West Alabama Regional Commission. Greene County is the only non-ARC county served by the West Alabama Regional Commission.

Recurring needs in rural West Alabama for which there is little or no relief are adequate day care and rural transportation programs and infrastructure. Also, there is emphasis once again among elected officials in West Alabama on a north-south corridor that is proposed to go through a number of West Alabama communities and is anticipated to generate economic development along its path.

As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Tuscaloosa Urban Area, West Alabama Regional Commission has long been a proponent of Rural Transportation Organizations (RTO) in the state so that rural areas can develop strategies for long-range planning of their transportation systems. The LDD will support efforts to improve transportation in rural West Alabama.

The LDD will continue to work with the Community Service Programs of West Alabama, Inc. in their efforts to train day care workers and provide a stable home-based environment for day care programs.

New opportunities are opening up in the area of education and literacy programs in West Alabama. One such program is a faith-based, after-school tutorial program in Hale County, a distressed county in the Black Belt region. The LDD will be researching funding sources and examining elements of the program that fit existing grant programs. A similar program is the Child Literacy Guild which is seeking to expand its outreach

from central Alabama into the West Alabama region. Both of these programs target underprivileged children.

The LDD will seek funding to produce an audio-visual presentation on CD of West Alabama's cultural, recreational and environmental qualities for use as a tool to promote tourism, retiree attraction, and business and industry recruitment.

The recently organized Greater Greensboro Chamber of Commerce is a good candidate for a leadership training program that would offer an incentive for businesses to become members of the organization and provide a beneficial activity for the business community.

Teen pregnancy prevention is another area of concern in West Alabama. The LDD will work with the Alabama Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy to educate the public and local officials about the economic impact of teen pregnancy on communities.

The LDD will provide follow-up on the previously reported 2004 activities; work with school boards, family resource centers, local governments and others with locating funding sources for education projects; and work with local governments and their appointed boards to extend service and improve local infrastructure for both residential and business customers.

The LDD will seek assistance for projects and programs in all six Appalachian counties, with an emphasis on distressed counties of Bibb, Hale and Pickens.

Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham: (Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, St. Clair, Shelby and Walker Counties) are served by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham. In anticipation of ARC's FY-2005 funding cycle, the St. Clair County Commission hosted a demonstration for Jefferson County officials of its recently completed ARC-funded video arraignment and video conferencing system in an effort to garner support to expand the video arraignment systems available in these two counties to work for the installation of video arraignment facilities at the states various prison facilities in an effort to further reduce local law enforcement and judicial system costs.

The LDD is assisting the city of Oneonta in its efforts to obtain funding that will enable the city to expand its industrial park to accommodate a new industry that will create a large number of high paying jobs. Funding assistance will also be extended to the Coosa Valley Water Supply Authority formed by St. Clair County, Pell City, Odenville, Ragland and Lincoln in Talladega County to develop a four million gallon per day surface water filtration plant and distribution network to a rapidly growing area that is dependent upon subsurface water supplies.

The LDD will assist Chilton County and the city of Clanton with the selection and development of new industrial park facilities and Jefferson County and the city of Birmingham with the redevelopment of an abandoned in-town industrial site. Assistance

is being extended to the city of Birmingham that is attempting to develop a new neighborhood business incubator in the economically depressed West End Neighborhood. LDD staff will assist the Titusville Development Corporation with the completion of an economic development strategic plan for this low income Birmingham neighborhood. LDD staff continues to assist area businesses with their gap financing needs.

ARC RLF recapitalization grant funds have been requested so the agency will have the resources to continue this program. Area municipalities continue to express interest in the LDD's new Economic and Community Revitalization Program. Downtown revitalization efforts are on going in the cities of Blountsville, Calera, Leeds and Oneonta. A new comprehensive plan is being developed for the city of Cordova. In addition, economic development opportunities will continue to be identified in on going studies of the I-65 north and I-20/59 east corridors. These regional and community planning efforts were enhanced in 2003, when the LDD co-located with Region 20/20 and the Auburn Center for Architecture and Urban Studies in the Center for Regional Planning and Design.

The LDD is also initiating a rural transportation planning process in an effort to provide rural and suburban areas with access to the regional transit system. LDD staff continues to provide administrative support services during the construction phase for the West Blount County Sewage System being installed by the Blount County Commission that has been funded by ARC and EPA and for the Steele Industrial Park that was funded by ARC and EDA.

East Alabama Regional Planning & Development Commission: (Calhoun, Chambers, Cherokee, Clay, Cleburne, Coosa, Etowah, Randolph, Talladega, and Tallapoosa Counties) are served by the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission. In the coming year, EARPDC will develop a Recreation Inventory for the Region that includes both recreational facilities funded by grants and those constructed without grant assistance. Grant funding will be pursued for those areas with little or no recreational opportunities to promote health and physical fitness for all age groups, especially children and senior adults. Some recreation improvements have already been made in the most economically distressed parts of the region through the Enterprise Community program. As administrator of these funds, the EARPDC has facilitated the construction of playgrounds, ball fields, and basketball courts, the purchase of athletic equipment and band instruments, and the hiring of recreation coordinators to organize activities that will put the equipment and facilities to use.

EARPDC will also be working cooperatively with the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham to complete a second phase of the I-20 corridor study. This project, which addresses development issues in the corridor between downtown Birmingham and the Georgia state line, will focus on the development of an economic impact model to determine where future development potential will generate a positive return on investment for targeted infrastructure improvements.

South Central Alabama Development Commission: (Bullock, Butler, Crenshaw, Lowndes, Macon, and Pike Counties). With the assistance of SCADC, Macon County and its municipalities will continue to implement the projects referenced in FY 2004. The county and the towns will also continue to identify and develop projects for future consideration that will meet or exceed the State’s ARC goals and objectives. Broad goals have been recognized at the county and municipal levels that complement the ARC goals, which will assist in driving project identification and development.

- Continuing the development and implementation of a Downtown Revitalization Plan for the City of Tuskegee;
- In tandem with the Downtown Revitalization Plan, making infrastructure, structural, and aesthetic improvements to the Tuskegee Downtown Area;
- Continuing implementation of the Tuskegee sanitary sewer system rehabilitation project;
- Developing new and existing industrial and commercial parks and sites within Macon County, to include infrastructure resources and utility services;
- Completing the development of the Halla Climate Control plant and industrial site located in Shorter;
- Establishing an Adult Day Health Center, to include the needs for the rehabilitation and/or expansion of existing facilities and programs;
- Rehabilitating the Abbott Park Community Center in Tuskegee;
- Developing a community/senior center in the Town of Shorter;
- Expanding and upgrading the local water system infrastructure for the Town of Shorter;
- Developing a comprehensive sanitary sewer system to serve the Town of Shorter;
- Expanding and upgrading the sanitary sewer system infrastructure for the Town of Notasulga;
- Enhancement and repairs to the local road and bridge infrastructure in the Town of Notasulga;
- Continue developing a county-wide Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance for the unincorporated areas of Macon County in order to provide county officials and residents with the basic planning tools necessary to promote community and economic development;
- Continuing the development of a county-wide GIS;
- Developing a county-wide utility infrastructure development plan;
- Developing a Comprehensive Plan and updating the Zoning Ordinance for the Town of Notasulga in order to provide local officials and residents with the basic planning tools necessary to promote community and economic development;
- Developing an Administrative Building for the Star-Mindingall Water Authority;
- Rehabilitating the water delivery system of the Star-Mindingall Water Authority;
- Rehabilitating the Gomillion Building/Macon County-Tuskegee Public Library in Tuskegee; and
- Continuing implementation of the ARC-funded *Tuskegee & Macon County Tourism Development Plan*.

Central Alabama Regional Planning & Development Commission: (Autauga, Elmore and Montgomery Counties). Of the three counties served by CARPDC, Elmore is the only Appalachian County and has been designated by ARC as a “transitional” county.

CARPDC will continue its efforts in Elmore County to assist the LDD in planning and preparing for the increasing growth pressures of new business, industry and residential development as well as in stabilizing and revitalizing existing businesses and residential areas. Along those lines CARPDC plans to evaluate the possibilities for new projects such as:

- ◆ Identification of possible locations to house a small business incubator within Elmore County.
- ◆ Workforce development and/or targeted vocational training to support the new industry and businesses moving into the area.
- ◆ Transportation Enhancement projects particularly focused around a new interstate interchange along I-65 in the Deatsville area.
- ◆ Continuing assistance with preparation or updating of land use, zoning and subdivision regulations for Elmore County municipalities.
- ◆ Drainage improvement projects within the LDD
- ◆ Community Enhancement and Recreational facilities for the communities of Elmore County
- ◆ Continued training for elected and appointed officials

Rapid growth both residentially and commercially in Elmore County will continue to be a major focus for planning activities. It is CARPDC's intention to continue assisting the LDD in planning and preparing for the increasing growth pressures of new business, industry and residential development as well as in stabilizing and revitalizing existing businesses and residential areas. Activities involved in this planning process will include neighborhood revitalization plans for distressed areas of the County as well as working to implement recommendations of central business district plans and the provision of community improvements focused on improving the quality of life for citizens of Elmore County.

Further, CARPDC staff anticipates the development in 2005 of a County wide Economic Development Strategy focused on the historical and recreational resources in which Elmore County is abundantly rich, and the tourism industry that is and can be developed around these resources.

North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments: (Cullman, Lawrence, and Morgan Counties) are served by the North-Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments. NARCOG staff will be mailing ARC grant information for FY 2005 to all member governments and communities within the Region. NARCOG will seek funding to increase the Revolving Loan Fund asset base in the Region, and will also seek opportunities for conducting seminars providing information on financing needs and will attend workshops and conferences focusing on the financing needs of small businesses.

Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments: (DeKalb, Jackson, Limestone, Madison, and Marshall Counties) are served by the Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments. During the 2005 program year, the District expects to continue with the following on-going efforts to increase the quality of life for the LDD's citizens:

- Continue vital local ongoing technical assistance of grant application and administrative support to regular grant programs such as the T-21/SAFTEA, LWCF, RTP, CDBG and FEMA/FIRE Grant Programs.
- Support any economic “targets of opportunity” economic development projects (i.e. Lowes location in Athens/Limestone County) and respond to any local “crisis” actions (i.e. infrastructure fires, tornado’s/flooding activities)
- Continue support of in-process Economic Development infrastructure projects – i.e. City of Fort Payne wastewater upgrade project (expected to generate at least 250 permanent jobs. – City of Huntsville EDA related downtown/trade/tourism enhancement (projected to generate up to 1,000 jobs)
- Continue ongoing RLF efforts (goal to loan \$200K+ & generate over \$500K in private investments, and create 40-50 new jobs.)
- Finish and submit Agency 501(C)(3) Application to the IRS (expected to generate significant revenue to the Area Agency on Aging’s outreach programs)
- Continued support of area USDA Community Facilities Loan Program applications (an estimated 3-5 communities are projected to be assisted in FY ’04).
- Promote and provide planning and Application support for area Hazard Mitigation and other FEMA related Planning/Grant applications.
- Continue on-going follow-up to Scottsboro Strategic Plan with support for implementing major objectives in workforce development (i.e. New industrial park,) downtown revitalization and tourism attraction/enhancement promotion.
- Finish support efforts to obtain a business incubator for Arab/Marshall County, and investigate and facilitate potential partnering for incubators in Jackson and Limestone counties.
- Finalize plans and let bids to begin construction of new Agency offices.

Staff participation continues in vital information streaming on business incubators, job retention training, workforce development coordination, advocacy, and critical environmental issues. In addition, the District’s LDD continues to monitor Homeland Security issues, and keep the counties advised on potential impacts at the local level.

State ARC Program Policies

The State of Alabama’s Appalachian Regional Commission Program will focus primarily on areas of highest need, areas suffering from economic depression, areas with existing health hazards, areas where projects will have the most significant impact, and areas that are not able to help themselves. Each project for which ARC funding is requested will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and must contain performance measures consistent with those set by the Commission in their Performance Plan for FY2005. The State’s maximum threshold for counties designated by the ARC as “distressed” will be 80 percent with a maximum of \$200,000 in ARC funds per project. The maximum threshold for counties designated by the ARC as “transitional” will be 50 percent with a maximum of \$200,000 in ARC funds per project. State thresholds for Administrative Grants for Local Development Districts (LDDs) will be 50 percent, except for those LDDs with “distressed” counties: the threshold will be 75 percent with a 25 percent match.

The State's Consolidated Technical Assistance program will be funded at a maximum of 50 percent. The maximum threshold for counties designated as "competitive" will be 30 percent with a maximum of \$200,000 in ARC funds per project. ARC funds are ineligible for activities occurring in counties designated as "attainment," except in the case of multi-county projects, which provide clearly defined benefits in one or more "distressed" counties. A waiver of the restriction for "attainment" counties may be requested in accordance with Section 7-6.6 of the ARC Code. Funding for Revolving Loan (RLF) programs will be considered with respect to established Commission-approved RLF Guidelines.

The state will work closely with the Alabama Development Office in efforts to increase trade in Appalachian Alabama, and will participate in trade events as well as events sponsored by the ARC Export Trade Advisory Council. The State of Alabama will support programs that increase export sales of small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) from Appalachian Alabama as well as programs that increase the number of SMEs engaged in international trade.

The State will not fund projects to construct or renovate school buildings, except in emergency situations. Project overruns will not generally be considered for additional ARC funding. When there are project underruns, ARC funds will generally be deobligated, returned, and made available for other eligible projects. A request for proportional reduction will be given consideration in projects with underruns.

Under certain circumstances, the state may waive the state policy maximum of \$200,000 per project. The State will target areas of greatest need, and will respond with ARC funding in emergency situations and whenever special development opportunities arise. The maximum threshold for emergency relief projects and projects considered as special development opportunities will be 80/20.

The State of Alabama will work closely with national and local partners to foster public and private partnerships to achieve these goals and objectives.

All project applications submitted will be required to include performance measures as a part of the application process. All projects submitted to the state for ARC funding must have output and outcome measures included in an evaluation plan from the grantee.

Appendix 1

LDD Directory

NORTHWEST – Region 1

Executive Director: Keith Jones
Address: Northwest Alabama Council
of Local Governments
PO Box 2603
Muscle Shoals, AL 35662
Telephone: 256-389-0500
Counties Included: Colbert, Franklin, Lauderdale, Marion, Winston

NORTH CENTRAL – Region 11

Executive Director: C. Ronald Matthews
Address: North Central Alabama Regional
Council of Governments
(216 Jackson Street, SE)
P.O. Box C
Decatur, AL 35602
Telephone: 256-355-4515
Counties Included: Cullman, Lawrence, Morgan

TOP OF ALABAMA –Region 12

Executive Director: Robert B. Culver
Top of Alabama Regional Council
of Governments
115 Washington Street, S.E.
Huntsville, AL 35801
Telephone: 256-533-3330
Counties Included: DeKalb, Jackson, Limestone, Madison, Marshall

WEST ALABAMA – Region 2

Executive Director: Robert B. Lake
West Alabama Regional
Commission
4200 Highway 69, North, Suite 1
Northport, AL 35473
Telephone: 205-333-2990
Counties Included: Bibb, Fayette, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, Tuscaloosa, (Greene)

Greater BIRMINGHAM-Region 3

Executive Director: Larry Watts
Address: Regional Planning Commission
Of Greater Birmingham
Suite 200
1731 First Avenue, North
Birmingham, AL 35203
Telephone: 205-251-8139
Counties Included: Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Cherokee, St. Clair, Shelby, Walker

EAST ALABAMA – Region 4

Executive Director: James W. (Bill) Curtis, AICP
Address: East Alabama Regional Planning
& Development Commission
(1130 Quintard Ave., Suite 300)
P.O. Box 2186
Anniston, AL 36202
Telephone: 256-237-6741
Counties Included: Calhoun, Chambers, Cherokee, Clay, Cleburne, Coosa, Etowah, Randolph, Talladega,
Tallapoosa

CENTRAL ALABAMA – Region 9

Executive Director: Bill Tucker
Address: Central Alabama Regional
Planning & Dev. Commission
125 Washington Ave. 3rd Floor
Montgomery, AL 36101-0051
Telephone: 334-262-4300
Counties Included: Elmore (Autauga, Montgomery)

SOUTH CENTRAL ALABAMA – Region 5

Executive Director: Tyson Howard
Address: South Central Alabama
Development Commission
5900 Carmichael Place
Montgomery, AL 36117
Telephone: 334-244-6903
Counties Included: Macon (Bullock, Butler, Crenshaw, Lowndes, Pike)